

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A catheter assembly for delivering an endoprosthesis within a body lumen, comprising:

a catheter having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion;

an expandable member associated with the distal end portion of the catheter;

an endoprosthesis disposed on the expandable member; and

a sheath disposed on the catheter and over the endoprosthesis, wherein the sheath is configured to rupture during expansion of the expandable member and retract after rupturing to expose the endoprosthesis.

Please rewrite claim 3 in independent form as follows:

3. (Amended) A catheter assembly for delivering an endoprosthesis within a body lumen, comprising:

a catheter having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion;

an expandable member associated with the distal end portion of the catheter;

an endoprosthesis disposed on the expandable member; and

a sheath disposed on the catheter and over the endoprosthesis, wherein the sheath is configured to rupture during expansion of the expandable member, wherein:

the sheath includes a plurality of circumferential perforations.

18. (Amended) An apparatus for delivering an endoprosthesis within a body lumen, comprising:

an endoprosthesis;

means for delivering the endoprosthesis within a body lumen, the means for delivering having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion;

means for expanding the endoprosthesis, the means for expanding associated with the distal end portion of the means for delivering, wherein the endoprosthesis is disposed on the means for expanding; and

means for retaining the endoprosthesis, the means for retaining being disposed on the means for delivering and over the endoprosthesis, wherein the means for retaining is configured to detach from the means for delivering when inflation fluid is introduced into the means for expanding and retract to expose the endoprosthesis.

Please rewrite claim 20 in independent form as follows:

20. (Amended) An apparatus for delivering an endoprosthesis within a body lumen, comprising:

an endoprosthesis;

means for delivering the endoprosthesis within a body lumen, the means for delivering having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion;

means for expanding the endoprosthesis, the means for expanding associated with the distal end portion of the means for delivering, wherein the endoprosthesis is disposed on the means for expanding; and

means for retaining the endoprosthesis, the means for retaining being disposed on the means for delivering and over the endoprosthesis, wherein the means for retaining is configured to detach from the means for delivering when inflation fluid is introduced into the means for expanding, wherein:

the means for retaining includes a plurality of circumferential perforations.

Please rewrite claim 23 in independent form as follows:

23. (Amended) An apparatus for delivering an endoprosthesis within a body lumen, comprising:

an endoprosthesis;

means for delivering the endoprosthesis within a body lumen, the means for delivering having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion;

means for expanding the endoprosthesis, the means for expanding associated with the distal end portion of the means for delivering, wherein the endoprosthesis is disposed on the means for expanding; and

means for retaining the endoprosthesis, the means for retaining being disposed on the means for delivering and over the endoprosthesis, wherein the means for retaining is

configured to detach from the means for delivering when inflation fluid is introduced into the means for expanding, wherein:

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B5 the means for retaining has a proximal end secured to the proximal end portion of the means for delivering, and the means for retaining has a distal end secured to the distal end portion of the means for delivering.

35. (Amended) A catheter assembly for delivering a stent within a patient's vasculature, comprising:

B6 a catheter tube having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion;

a balloon formed on the distal end portion of the catheter tube;

a stent having a first end and a second end disposed on the balloon; and

a sheath secured to the distal end portion of the catheter tube, wherein the sheath is stretched over the balloon and over the stent, and wherein the sheath includes a weakened section configured to rupture during inflation of the balloon and is configured to rupture into portions which retract towards the first and second ends of the endoprosthesis after rupturing to expose the endoprosthesis.

[Please rewrite claim 36 in independent form as follows:]

36. (Amended) A catheter assembly for delivering a stent within a patient's vasculature, comprising:

a catheter tube having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion;

a balloon formed on the distal end portion of the catheter tube;

a stent disposed on the balloon; and

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a sheath secured to the distal end portion of the catheter tube, wherein the sheath is stretched over the balloon and over the stent, and wherein the sheath includes a weakened section configured to rupture during inflation of the balloon, wherein:

the weakened section comprises a plurality of circumferential perforations.

Please cancel without prejudice claims 45-64.

Please add the following new claims:

65. (New) A catheter assembly for delivering an endoprosthesis within a body lumen, comprising:

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a catheter having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion;

an expandable member associated with the distal end portion of the catheter;

an endoprosthesis disposed on the expandable member; and

a sheath disposed on the catheter and completely over the endoprosthesis, wherein the sheath is configured to rupture during expansion of the expandable member.

66. (New) The catheter assembly of claim 65, wherein:

the endoprosthesis has a first end and a second end and the sheath is configured to rupture into portions which retract towards the first and second ends of the endoprosthesis after rupturing to expose the endoprosthesis.

67. (New) The catheter assembly of claim 66, wherein:
the sheath includes a weakened section configured to rupture during expansion of the expandable member.

68. (New) The catheter assembly of claim 65, wherein:
the sheath is stretched over and secured to the expandable member.

69. (New) The catheter assembly of claim 65, wherein:
the sheath is stretched over and secured to the distal end portion of the catheter.

70. (New) The catheter assembly of claim 65, wherein:
the sheath includes a plurality of perforations allow the sheath to rupture during expansion of the expandable member.

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated November 29, 2002. Claims 1-64 are pending in this application. Previously, an election was made by Applicants to prosecute the invention of Group I, Species 1A and 2D, claims 1-5, 7-9, 11, 13-26, 28, 30-38 and 40-44. Claims 6, 10, 12, 27, 29, 39, and 45-64 were withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention. By this Amendment, Applicants have now cancelled without prejudice claims 45-64 as these claims will be prosecuted in a divisional application to be filed. By this Amendment,